

Recommendations for the Indiana SBOE Regarding its Turnaround Academies

Overview

This document includes three main parts:

- Summary of key learnings from Indiana's turnaround efforts
- Seven high priority recommendations for improving the overall structure and likelihood of success at Indiana turnaround academies
- Specific recommendations and rationale for immediate decisions facing the SBOE regarding current and pending turnaround academies, and state infrastructure to effectively implement these recommendations

At the conclusion, there is a final section reflecting all recommendations and inputs from Indiana stakeholders that will require support from partner entities and may also require legislative or regulatory modifications. This section is intended to guide the Committee's decision making.

Part 1. Key Learnings from Indiana's Turnaround Efforts

For this project, we reviewed relevant materials and conducted interviews with representatives from the school corporations, partner organizations, current and former principals, and state oversight entities that have been involved in the Indiana Turnaround Academy model. In addition, we collected and analyzed up to five years of demographic and performance data from each of the state's nine turnaround academies. Based on these discussions and analyses, we found:

- **Many of the turnaround academies serve a markedly different student population than the schools served before state intervention.** Enrollment has dropped dramatically at all of the schools implementing the Turnaround School Operator (TSO) model, and in all but one TSO school, the percentage of students qualifying for free or reduced priced lunch has increased by between 8 and 21 percentage points.
- **Performance has been uneven, and gains modest at best.** Across the turnaround academies, performance has been uneven, with most schools making gains in some subjects, and losing ground on others. Only two schools – Emmerich Manual and Broad Ripple – have improved their letter grades in the state accountability system. In the case of Broad Ripple, the high school and middle schools separated and the high school became a magnet school. The middle school has continued to underperform. Moreover, the state intervention models have only been in place for two years at most turnaround academies, which provides little performance data for the intervention.
- **Data demonstrating TSO performance are limited.** The TSOs have operated the turnaround academies for two years, and as described above, there have been large changes in the students attending those schools. In addition, transitional issues related to resources, building conditions, and enrollment diverted attention and resources from academic improvements early in the turnaround efforts. Together, these factors make it difficult to determine how much of the

changes (or lack thereof) we see in student performance are a result of the TSO or these other factors. More time and data are needed to evaluate them.

- **Evidence suggests that state intervention has motivated some school corporations** with chronically low-performing schools to implement new, bolder reform plans and models. Several interviewees commented that state intervention in low-performing schools is a critical step to communicating the urgent need for dramatic change in chronically failing schools.
- **Interviewees largely agreed on the importance of a number of key factors**, including: clarifying the performance outcomes the state expects from school operators and school corporations; building a deeper bench of talented educators and partner organizations to lead and teach in turnaround schools; making school intervention decisions in the context of broader school corporation reform efforts, and establishing clear roles and responsibilities for school corporations, partner organizations, school communities, and the state.

Part 2. Priority Recommendations for Indiana’s Turnaround Academies

Based on our analysis of the challenges and successes at the current turnaround academies and promising practices from state intervention methods nationally, we identified eight priority recommendations to improve the structure and likelihood of success of Indiana’s state turnaround academies.

1) Articulate a clear set of transition options and criteria for current and future turnaround academies	
Rationale	If after five years a turnaround academy has not already exited state intervention, Indiana Public Law 221 requires the SBOE to review the school’s progress and determine how best to proceed. Though the law outlines options from which the SBOE may choose (e.g., renew the agreement with the management company, enter into a management agreement with a new company, etc.) it does not specify the criteria for choosing among those options or how the SBOE could proceed in implementing them, nor has the state done so.
Key Elements	<p>Two key considerations should guide turnaround academies’ transition decisions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Success at the school level. Did the school meet targets for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student academic growth / performance • Operating conditions, including financial viability, staff and leadership retention, student retention, special education compliance, and curriculum and academic systems 2. The school corporation’s capacity to support the school moving forward. Has the school corporation demonstrated the capacity to sustain and build on turnaround success, including evidence of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making significant improvement in its other priority and focus schools • Making appropriate district-level changes in staffing and structure to better support its low-performing schools • Providing school leaders the autonomy to operate differently • Ongoing dialogue and cooperation between the external partner and the school corporation to facilitate a smooth transition <p>The matrix below summarizes the best options available to the SBOE at each turnaround academy based on school success and the capacity of the school corporation. Recommendation #7 below provides additional recommendations on setting school and school corporation-level performance goals.</p>

Has the school turnaround been successful?			
School corporation has the capacity to sustain turnaround efforts	Yes	Yes	No
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transition school back to the school corporation • Convert to charter school <i>(if supported by school staff and local community)</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transition school back to the school corporation • Consider school closure or consolidation in conjunction with the school corporation and school community <i>(facility would return to school corporation)</i>
	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convert to charter school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remain under state intervention <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Facilitate TSO transition (select new provider), or ○ Facilitate Transformation Zone in school corporation ○ Implement alternative intervention strategy • Consider school closure or consolidation in conjunction with the school corporation and school community <i>(facility would return to school corporation)</i>

2) Increase state capacity to manage the scope of state-directed turnaround interventions	
Rationale	<p>P.L. 221 requires the state to take on a number of new roles and responsibilities to improve chronically low-performing schools, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruiting and cultivating a robust supply of high-quality partner organizations • Developing and overseeing a more comprehensive set of MOUs with school corporations and partner organizations • Developing more comprehensive accountability metrics • Establishing the systems and resources to monitor and manage performance goals • Establishing systems and resources to actively engage local communities in the turnaround process • Proactively communicating with school corporations, schools, partner organizations, and local communities to align actions and respond to ongoing challenges, and • Managing the transition process as schools move in and out of state intervention status. <p>However, the state largely lacks the capacity to effectively plan and implement this scope of responsibilities.</p>

Key Elements	<p>The state should take two immediate steps to increase its capacity to meet its responsibility under P.L. 221:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase the level of financial resources dedicated to the management of the state intervention process 2. Establish an organizational and governance model that provides sufficient authority to manage the process, and clear accountability to the SBOE for implementing policies (see details from “Structure of State Turnaround Unit,” below). <p>In addition, the state should seek to improve the conditions under which it works and the tools at its disposal to turn around low performing schools. Most notably, chronically failing schools are often a symptom of school corporation policies and management practices that inadequately meet the academic, social, and emotional needs of students. In some instances, it will not be possible to improve the school unless the state also has the authority to make dramatic changes to how the school corporation operates. Policymakers should therefore work to provide the state the authority to take over a failing school corporation if it is the best option to support student learning.</p> <p>However, state takeover of a school corporation requires tremendous planning and capacity on the part of the state to be effective. Even if the state receives the authority to do so, it should serve as the option of last resort where there is a high percentage of schools in the school corporation subject to individual takeover, and the state determines that tools for individual school turnaround are not the best approach.</p> <p>In addition, the state should reserve the flexibility to decide whether to take over an entire school corporation on a case by case basis that acknowledges changes within the district and other pertinent conditions rather than being required to do so if the school corporation meets certain criteria.</p>
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3) Establish avenues for local, community-based councils to be informed of and involved in for the change process at turnaround academies	
Rationale	<p>Although there were a number of public hearings, and decisions regarding the turnaround academies were communicated in public meetings, there was not a clear and meaningful role for local communities to provide input into the decision-making process, nor were there adequate resources for transparent and timely communication with families and school communities. The absence of intentional and effective community engagement has negatively impacted the success and sustainability of the turnaround interventions.</p>
Key elements	<p>The state should take a lead role to ensure that local, community-based advisory councils are actively involved in the turnaround process. This role might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing a formal process for the formation of local councils with clearly defined roles and responsibilities that include input on the intervention to be implemented, ongoing monitoring and accountability, and transition decisions • Assigning dedicated state-level community engagement coordinators to work with turnaround academy school communities

4) Build a deeper bench of partner organizations and education talent to support turnaround efforts	
Rationale	Both the Lead Partner and TSO models hinge on the availability of a ready supply of high-quality partners with which school corporations and the state can partner to lead school turnaround efforts. Across the country, the most promising turnaround strategies that states and school districts have implemented rely on recruiting high-performing charter organizations, or increasing the capacity of local, high-performing organizations and individuals to lead turnarounds. Thus far, Indiana has relied primarily on out-of-state partner organizations that face significant barriers to recruiting talent, engaging local communities, and scaling operations that facilitate success and sustainability.
Key Elements	<p>Indiana can build a deeper bench of partner organizations to support turnaround efforts by both actively recruiting proven organizations and fostering the conditions in which they are likely to succeed, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incubating local school turnaround operators (TSOs) by investing in local, high-performing charter schools and school leaders to replicate successful school models in turnaround schools • Ensuring that partner organizations have the autonomy and flexibility they need to implement their turnaround plan • Ensuring that the schools in which partner organizations operate receive adequate resources • Offering successful partner organizations the opportunity to continue their work in the state beyond their contract and incentives to do so (e.g., access to unused or under-utilized facilities in which to operate a new charter, additional funding) <p>At the same time, the state should build a pipeline of excellent teachers and school leaders to work at turnaround academies. To this end, the state should pursue the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aligning incentives for university partners and teacher preparation programs to produce teachers and leaders uniquely prepared to work in a turnaround setting • Partnering with talent organizations with a proven record of identifying, recruiting, and training effective teachers and leaders • Encouraging turnaround academies to use staffing models that expand the impact of high-quality leaders to more schools and high-quality teachers to more students

5) Formalize the Transformation Zone model as a state intervention model	
Rationale	Evansville-Vanderburgh School Corporation (EVSC) is currently using the Transformation Zone model to improve student performance at Glenwood Leadership Academy. According to both EVSC and Mass Insight, the model is experiencing initial success there. It may also serve as an appropriate state intervention at other turnaround academies outside of EVCS. The model has not been formalized as a state intervention model in EVSC or elsewhere.

Key Elements	<p>Establish a process to formalize the Transformation Zone model as an approved state intervention model that includes the following steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School corporation submits a bold plan for improving student performance within 3 years • The state works with the school corporation to revise and approve the plan • State approves the plan • The state and school corporation enter into an MOU with the school corporation that addresses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Performance benchmarks and consequences, ○ Expectations for operating conditions within the Zone, ○ Oversight by the state, ○ Student enrollment patterns, ○ How the state and school corporation will work together ○ How the school corporation will work with an external partner (if it engages one) <p>Ideally, the school corporation would also identify an external partner to support the school corporation's efforts and with which the state could contract as a turnaround operator, allowing for greater operating flexibility. The model does not hinge on the presence of an external partner, however, and we recommend that policymakers pursue legislation that allows the state to grant school corporations greater autonomy and operational flexibility in the absence of an external partner.</p>
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6) Offer the "Lead Partner" model as an opportunity for school corporations to pursue dramatic change without formal state intervention	
Rationale	<p>Indiana's current Lead Partner model offers partner organizations limited authority. It also requires a high degree of collaboration and integration with existing school and school corporation policies and systems to facilitate transformative change. This degree of cooperation is nearly impossible when the state mandates the partnership. In fact, all of the schools that initially implemented a Lead Partner model have faltered. However, if school corporations view collaboration with a Lead Partner as an opportunity to build capacity and avoid formal state intervention, it could provide an effective incentive for the school corporation to implement meaningful change where little incentive existed.</p>

Key Elements	<p>No longer use the Lead Partner model as a state intervention. Instead, re-purpose it as an opportunity for school corporations to voluntarily pursue dramatic change that can potentially allow the school corporation to avoid state intervention.</p> <p>As it looks likely that a school may become eligible for state intervention, but before it actually is eligible for state intervention – for example, when a school receives an “F” rating for four years in a row – encourage the school corporation to identify and work with a lead partner to develop a bold reform plan and turn around the school. The state can support the school corporation developing a plan to fund the effort from existing funds or identify grant funding.</p> <p>Whereas the state currently assigns a Lead Partner as part of the state takeover process, school corporations would <i>choose</i> to implement the model as a way to <i>avoid</i> formal state takeover of schools (TSO), providing a much greater incentive to cooperate with the partner organization. Although school corporations would choose this option, the state would play a key role facilitating the relationship between the external provider and the school corporation, provide technical assistance throughout the process, approve partner selection, and set conditions and accountability for the relationship through an MOU with the school corporation.</p> <p>If the state determines that a school corporation is not capable or unwilling to improve student performance at a chronically low-performing school through the Lead Partner model, the state would proceed with formal school takeover and implement a different model.</p>
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7) Establish MOUs between school corporations, TSOs, and state that more clearly define roles and responsibilities.	
Rationale	<p>The state directly contracted with external partners (TSOs and Lead Partners) at the direction of the SBOE. However, the external partners and school corporations were largely left on their own to clarify their operating relationship through MOUs. Often, these MOUs failed to clarify key roles and responsibilities, which later hindered turnaround efforts. Many of the operational challenges that have negatively impacted Turnaround Academy success, including conflicts over transportation services, facility maintenance and repairs, ownership of school equipment, student recruitment and enrollment, community relations, and operational authority could have been avoided if the state had played a more active role in establishing MOUs with the school corporations and partner organizations.</p>

Key Elements	<p>The SBOE should take the lead to ensure that clear roles and responsibilities are established for the state, school corporation, and external partners. At a minimum, an MOU that includes all parties and / or partner contracts should clarify the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operations: What operational support will the district and state continue to provide and at what cost? • Student enrollment and transition: What are the parameters for student recruitment, enrollment, and records transfer that will guide school corporation and partner actions? • Finances: What funds will the school operator receive over the course of the turnaround contract, and what terms will dictate the ongoing services provided by school corporations? • Materials and equipment: Who “owns” the materials within the building? • Community engagement: How will school, district, and state leaders coordinate communication and engagement with local communities? • Autonomy: Which autonomies will the school and / or external partner have? • Conflict resolution: If any of the parties involved does not abide by the MOU, how will the conflict be resolved? • Lines of authority: To whom and how must the external partner and school corporation report? How will the state enforce the MOU or contract when needed?
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8) Reset performance goals for all turnaround academies to inform transition options.	
Rationale	<p>State contracts with TSOs included performance goals in the contract, but several factors make these goals inadequate as a criteria for making transition decisions, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dramatic changes in student enrollment (both in terms of raw numbers and demographics) make the baseline and target proficiencies inappropriate for evaluation • There is no clear link between performance goals and transition decisions • The scope of TSO performance goals is not consistent across contracts

<p>Key elements</p>	<p>The SBOE should take action now to reset performance goals and targets for current TSO contracts and to guide its future evaluation of and response to TSO performance. These goals should meet at least two criteria:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reflect the school’s current status and priorities as identified through a comprehensive needs assessment 2. Reflect the entirety of goals for the turnaround, including: measures of student academic growth and achievement, school culture and climate, student retention, special education services, student discipline, and operational measures on the financial and organizational sustainability of the school. <p>In addition to establishing metrics by which to evaluate the success of the external partner, the state should also establish criteria and a process by which to evaluate the school corporation’s capacity to sustain the turnaround if the school returns to the school corporation. Potential criteria include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant improvement in its other priority and focus schools (from P.L. 221) • Appropriate district-level changes in staffing and structure to better support its low-performing schools (from P.L. 221) • Examples of the school corporation providing school leaders autonomy to operate differently • Evidence of an ongoing dialogue and cooperation between the external partner and the school corporation to facilitate a smooth transition <p>Performance on these metrics relating to schools / operator success and district capacity, should then guide transition decisions as described in the matrix under Recommendation 1.</p>
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Part 3. SBOE Turnaround Academy Decision Points

Decisions on Current and Pending Turnaround Academies

To date, the state has established nine turnaround academies and implemented three turnaround models in these schools:

1. **Lead Partner.** The state contracts with an external partner to work with the school corporation in a limited capacity to operate certain, limited aspects the school. The school corporation continues to employ all staff
2. **Turnaround School Operator (TSO).** The state contracts with an external partner to operate the school independently, similar to a charter school. The school corporation continues to provide limited operational services. The TSO employs all staff.
3. **Transformation Zone.** The school corporation develops a bold plan for turning around its failing school(s). The state and school corporation enter into an MOU that discusses how the school corporation will operate differently to implement the plan and outlines the state's oversight authority. Ideally, the school corporation will engage an external partner, with which the state can contract as a turnaround operator, allowing for greater operational flexibility at the school. In this instance, the turnaround operator employs all staff. However, school corporations is not required to work with an external partner, in which case the school corporation continues to employ all staff.

As noted above, all of the original Lead Partners have withdrawn from the turnaround academies and we recommend that the state no longer use this model at its turnaround academies. Currently, four schools are using the TSO model, and one school is using a Transformation Zone. The other four schools are between models and the SBOE must determine how to proceed. The tables below summarizes the status of the state's current turnaround academies.

School(s)	Decision Point	Recommendation	Rationale
Emma Donnan Emmerich Manual Carr Howe (IPS)	CSUSA (the TSO) has asked for a five-year extension on its current contract	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extend current contract by two years (through June 2018) • Ensure that new contract sets clear and explicit performance benchmarks to inform later transition options • Establish an MOU with IPS that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Sets clear expectations regarding its continued role at these school, including: facilities maintenance, student enrollment / feeder patterns, district resources to which the school is entitled (e.g. coaches) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Although there have been some indicators of improvement, two schools continue to earn Fs in the state's accountability system • A number of transitional and operational challenges have stalled the turnaround effort, making more time a reasonable request • Extending CSUSA's contract through 2018 will provide three more years of performance data aligned with clear performance goals and more stable

School(s)	Decision Point	Recommendation	Rationale
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Includes benchmarks by which to assess IPS's capacity to sustain turnaround efforts if the school returns to the school corporation in the future 	operating conditions to evaluate success and inform transition decisions
Emma Donnan Emmerich Manual (IPS)	CSUSA (the TSO) has requested to expand Emma Donnan to serve grades K-8 (v. 7-8) to support financial sustainability and create a K-12 feeder pattern in the CSUSA schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SBOE does not have authority to allow turnaround academies to expand and serve additional grades Therefore, to address financial sustainability concerns, SBOE should mediate decision with IPS, CSUSA and the school communities to transfer Emma Donnan students to Emmerich Manual and return Emma Donnan facility to IPS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manual has the capacity to incorporate Emma Donnan students because enrollment at both schools has dropped dramatically since intervention and consolidating the schools improves operational efficiency Emma Donnan is one of only two 7/8 middle school in IPS, and does not benefit from a natural feeder pattern Current statute does not allow a turnaround academy under state intervention to expand into additional grades Additional input from school community and school corporation needed to make final decision
Emma Donnan (IPS)	Alternatively, CSUSA has requested the ability to place a charter K-6 school in the Donnan facility.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No decision required at this time – outside of SBOE authority 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CSUSA is a for-profit operator, and under state law, it cannot receive a charter. Instead, a non-profit organization must apply for a charter from an Indiana authorizer and select CSUSA as its management company. This has not yet occurred. Additionally, even if the above conditions are met, IPS still owns the Emma Donnan facility. It would have to agree to sell or lease it to the non-profit board described above

School(s)	Decision Point	Recommendation	Rationale
Arlington (IPS)	Arlington requires a new intervention plan since Ed Power is withdrawing as the TSO at the end of the 2014-15 school year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporate Arlington into a new IPS Transformation Zone: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ IPS must submit a bold plan for improving student performance at Arlington within 3 years ○ The state approves the plan or works with IPS to revise it until it meets the state's standards ○ The state enters into an MOU with IPS that sets clear performance benchmarks and consequences, expectations for operating conditions within the Zone, oversight by the state, student enrollment patterns, and how the state and IPS will work together ○ The state extends school intervention status for three years (through June 2018) ○ If IPS identifies an external partner, the state contracts with the partner as a turnaround operator to set clear performance benchmarks and provide additional operational flexibility • IPS will assume direct management of the school. The Mayor's Office (OEI) could potentially oversee the orderly and efficient transition of school management from Ed Power back to IPS, including transfer of all school equipment and student records 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Another high-quality TSO is not available to operate Arlington • Several major changes have happened at IPS since the state intervened at Arlington, signaling a new opportunity for dramatic reform, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Leadership changes at the superintendent and board levels ○ Passage of H.B. 1321 authorizing IPS to create innovation network schools ○ Corporation grade improved from "F" to "D" under state accountability system • Extending state intervention status for three years with clear performance goals and stable operating conditions provides the time and conditions to evaluate success and inform transition decisions • The Mayor's Office has provided oversight of turnaround academies within IPS and has experience with charter schools and closure. As a result, it has the best vantage point for facilitating the transition if it is willing to do so
Washington Marshall Broad Ripple (IPS)	These schools require a new intervention plan in the absence of a sustainable external partner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporate the schools into a new IPS Transformation Zone <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ IPS must submit a bold plan for improving student performance at each of the schools within three years (through the 2017-18 school year) ○ The state approves the plan or works with IPS to revise it until it meets the state's standards ○ The state enters into an MOU with IPS that sets clear performance benchmarks and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Another high-quality TSO is not available to operate the schools • Several major changes have happened at IPS since the state intervened at Arlington, signaling a new opportunity for dramatic reform, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Leadership changes at the superintendent and board levels

School(s)	Decision Point	Recommendation	Rationale
		<p>consequences, expectations for operating conditions within the Zone, oversight by the state, student enrollment patterns, and how the state and IPS will work together</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Extend school intervention status for three years (through June 2018) ○ If IPS identifies an external partner, the state contracts with the partner as a turnaround operator to set clear performance benchmarks and provide additional operational flexibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Passage of H.B. 1321 authorizing IPS to create innovation network schools ○ Corporation grade improved from “F” to “D” under state accountability system ● Extending state intervention status for three years with clear performance goals and stable operating conditions provides the time and conditions to evaluate success and inform transition decisions
Glenwood (EVSC)	EVSC’s Transformation Zone has not been formalized as the state intervention at Glenwood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Formalize EVSC’s Transformation Zone as the state intervention at Glenwood <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Enter into an MOU with EVSC that sets clear performance benchmarks and consequences, expectations for operating conditions within the Zone, oversight by the state, student enrollment patterns, how EVSC will work with Mass Insight (including autonomies), and how the state and IPS will work together ○ Enter into a formal contract between the state and Mass Insight that sets clear and explicit performance benchmarks to inform later transition options 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● There have been early indicators of success for some schools in the EVSC Transformation Zone, but the lack of measureable academic progress for Glenwood in Year 1 emphasizes importance of clear operating conditions and performance goals in an MOU ● Establishing Mass Insight as the turnaround operator allows for greater operational flexibilities at the school
Lincoln <i>Pending Turnaround Academy</i> (EVSC)	Lincoln is eligible for state intervention and requires a model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identify inclusion in EVSC’s Transformation Zone as the state intervention model at Lincoln <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Enter into an MOU with EVSC that sets clear performance benchmarks and consequences, expectations for operating conditions within the Zone, oversight by the state, student enrollment patterns, how EVSC will work with Mass Insight (including autonomies), and how the state and IPS will work together 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● There have been early indicators of success for some EVSC Transformation Zone schools ● Establishing Mass Insight as the turnaround operator allows for greater operational flexibilities at the school

School(s)	Decision Point	Recommendation	Rationale
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Enter into a formal contract between the state and Mass Insight that sets clear and explicit performance benchmarks to inform later transition options 	
Roosevelt (GCSC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current contract lacks clear and explicit performance benchmarks • Edison has recently communicated its concerns about the financial sustainability of its efforts in Gary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-negotiate contract to set clear and explicit benchmarks • Establish an MOU between the SBOE and GCSC to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Sets clear expectations regarding its continued role at the school, including: facilities maintenance, student enrollment / feeder patterns, district resources to which the school is entitled (e.g., coaches). ○ Includes benchmarks by which to assess GCSC's capacity to sustain turnaround efforts if the school returns to the school corporation in the future • Based on the analysis of GCSC financial and operating conditions and a decision on Dunbar-Pulaski (below), SBOE to consider recommendations for Roosevelt to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Extend current contract by two years (through June 2018) ○ Mediate a decision with GCSC, Edison, and the school communities to transfer Dunbar-Pulaski students to Roosevelt to improve operating conditions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New financial concerns have arisen in Gary in recent days, requiring further evaluation of the situation and possible challenges to effective turnaround work • A number of transitional and operational challenges have stalled the turnaround effort, making more time a reasonable request • Extending Edison's contract through 2018 will provide three more years of performance data aligned with clear performance goals and more stable operating conditions to evaluate success and inform transition decisions. However, any contract extension decision must be informed by a broader assessment of the financial condition of the district. • Edison has recently notified SBOE staff that it has concerns about the financial viability of its model given high facility costs and low student enrollment. Also, potential interruption of student transportation given the GCSC bussing contract issues is of concern.
Dunbar-Pulaski <i>Pending Turnaround Academy</i> (GCSC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dunbar-Pulaski is eligible for state intervention • GCSC is undergoing deep 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct a needs assessment of GCSC and evaluate state intervention options and potential partners as soon as is feasible, and no later than April 2015 unless the SBOE determines more time is required • Postpone decision until the above is complete 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New financial concerns have arisen in Gary in recent days, requiring further evaluation of the situation and possible challenges to effective turnaround work

School(s)	Decision Point	Recommendation	Rationale
	financial troubles impacting how the school corporation operates		

Structure of State Turnaround Unit

As described in Recommendation 2, “Building the State’s Capacity to Intervene in Failing Schools,” the state currently lacks the capacity to effectively implement P.L. 221. One part of the solution is establishing an organizational and governance model that provides sufficient authority to manage the process, and clear accountability to the SBOE for implementing policies.

Based on our interviews in Indiana and our research of promising practices nationally, two options seem most viable at the current time – an independent state turnaround unit or a state takeover district (LEA). It was outside of the scope of our recommendations to evaluate these options against the current operating conditions in Indiana. Below we describe and compare how key elements would work in each to inform the SBOE’s decision-making process:

Comparison of Key Characteristics: Independent State Turnaround Unit v. State Takeover District

Characteristic	Independent State Turnaround Unit	State Takeover District
LEA for Turnaround Academy	School or operator	Takeover district
Funding flow	Directly to schools	Through takeover district
Chartering authority	No	Yes
Ability to direct-run schools	No	Yes
Directly accountable to SBOE	Yes	Yes, consistent with existing LEA accountability structure
Ability to manage state and federal funds	Yes	Yes
Additional funds to build talent bench	Yes	Yes
Authority to take over failing school corporation (if corresponding legislation passes)	Yes	Yes
Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct accountability to the SBOE • Governance and operational policies can be tailored to specific needs of the turnaround unit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Autonomy from state policies on staffing, procurement, decision making, etc.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is a flexible solution, with option to become a state takeover district/LEA in the future 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governing board focused exclusively on turnaround activities without other duties and responsibilities • Reporting / accountability structure can be based on existing LEA model • Direct charter authorizing authority under existing Indiana statute
Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unit staffing is subject to existing state policies and requirements • No direct charter authorizing authority 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LEA designation may not always fit with role of a state-wide turnaround authority • Requires appointment of separate governing board, adding layer between turnaround operators and SBOE

Legislative Policies to Support Revisions to SBOE School Intervention

SBOE General Counsel has already provided legal memos in response to questions that have arisen through the work of the Committee. Additional analysis will be conducted in advance of the December 3, 2014 SBOE meeting and will depend upon the guidance from the Committee to SBOE staff during the November 17, 2014 Committee meeting.

It is useful to remember the historical context in which Indiana's school turnaround decisions have been made, as well as the guiding principles articulated by the SBOE when making intervention decisions. First, the Committee has stated that the focus of the state, district and communities impacted by these decisions must be upon what is best for the students who are enrolled in a chronically underperforming school. Second, the Committee supports the principle of subsidiarity, which means that – whenever possible – actions should be taken at the local level if the capacity and willingness to act is evident. Third, when years of unsuccessful attempts and the investment of millions of dollars have not resulted in significant and sustained improvements for the schools in question, the state is legally charged with direct intervention. It is in the best interest of students to ensure that, whatever intervention is selected, that intervention is supported by the state and community to allow the maximum chance for success.

It is evident from the Committee's work that the state's turnaround framework needs to be strengthened to ensure that all appropriate measures are being put into place to support a successful outcome for students, schools and communities.

To guide the Committee’s decision making in response to the recommendations contained within this report, SBOE staff have summarized the recommendations from Public Impact and requests from Indiana stakeholders that would require outreach and buy-in from partner organizations, and may also require legislative or regulatory changes.

AREA	Inputs from Indiana Stakeholders or Recommendations from Public Impact	Potential Approaches
HUMAN CAPITAL/ TALENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aligning incentives for university partners and teacher preparation programs to produce teachers and leaders uniquely prepared to work in a turnaround setting Partnering with talent organizations with a proven record of identifying, recruiting, and training effective teachers and leaders Encouraging turnaround academies to use staffing models that expand the impact of high-quality leaders to more schools and high-quality teachers to more students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SBOE to seek support from Commission for Higher Education to communicate need for more emphasis upon turnaround skills development in teacher preparation programs SBOE to request creation of turnaround talent acquisition and retention fund to be administered by SBOE Partner with existing talent development (e.g., TFA, Mind Trust) organizations to increase supply of talented educators for turnaround schools SBOE to task dedicated turnaround unit with identifying and disseminating staffing models to guide turnaround efforts, and potentially using funding to encourage a shift to these new models
ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish an organizational and governance model that provides sufficient authority to manage the process, and clear accountability to the SBOE for implementing policies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SBOE to determine optimal organizational and governance model per Public Impact’s recommendations SBOE to be the party that enters into MOU or contract with districts and external partners Consider SBOE appointing the head of the Turnaround Unit with direct reporting to SBOE (akin to existing special education model; the state’s special education director is appointed by the Governor and reports to the SBOE)
FACILITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hybrid funding and responsibilities for facilities maintenance and capital improvement projects results in lack of clear authority, misaligned incentives, and has led to ongoing conflicts and challenges 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SBOE to require districts in which there are turnaround schools under SBOE oversight to conduct a district-wide assessment of facilities utilization and prepare a facilities master plan to (1)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of comprehensive approach to district's use of facilities, coupled with underutilized or unoccupied facilities that are a financial burden on the district and lead to inefficient allocation of resources 	<p>ensure optimal use of facilities and (2) identify which schools should be closed, repurposed, or renovated.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SBOE to request creation of school turnaround facilities fund (revolving loan fund) to be administered by the SBOE. SBOE to request ability for external partners under TSO model to receive a <i>pro rata</i> portion of property tax dollars and gain ability to maintain and upgrade the facility
FUNDING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase the level of financial resources dedicated to the management of the state intervention process The state's decision to allocate the finite supply of School Improvement Grant (SIG) funds to more schools in an effort to assist schools in avoiding state takeover has resulted in reduced funding for our most struggling schools, and has contributed to implementation challenges halfway through the 5-year intervention period. The turnaround business model as currently structured and funded is not an economically viable or sustainable one, due in part to the costs required to maintain large and aging facilities and related infrastructure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SBOE to request creation of turnaround fund to be administered by SBOE. Funds to be used to supplement SIG dollars to support effective turnaround efforts through contracts with TSOs and Transformation Partners. SBOE to rethink the allocation of SIG dollars to TSOs to ensure that the maximum amount of federal funds are being allocated toward external partners directly operating the state's lowest performing schools. This may help ensure these partners are provided with adequate resources to implement their models and demonstrate success within the initial 5-year intervention period.
SYSTEMIC APPROACHES/ GREATER FLEXIBILITY FOR DISTRICTS AND EXTERNAL PARTNERS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stakeholders agree that school turnarounds must be addressed systemically, so that earlier interventions can occur and result in better long-term outcomes. Stakeholders agree maximum flexibility is required to implement bold solutions to address the urgent needs in struggling schools and systems TSOs have requested the ability to either offer a K-12 solution under the turnaround statute, or co-locate a charter feeder system within a turnaround facility. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SBOE to consider modifications to existing statute to increase flexibility for both TSOs and districts to implement a systemic approach designed to serve students as effectively and efficiently as possible. Ideas include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allow TSOs to enroll students in lower grades to ensure earlier interventions are occurring. Allow charter schools operated by the TSO to be co-located within the turnaround facility. Expand scope of HEA 1321 to apply to every district in the state with one or more school

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TSOs have also requested flexibility to co-locate students from more than one turnaround school within one facility. • IPS has requested the ability to take advantage of HEA 1321 as a means to operate failing schools, although a charter partner who has the capacity and willingness to conduct turnaround work has not yet been identified. • Public Impact recommends that policymakers should work to provide the state the authority to take over a failing school corporation as a last resort if it is the best option to support student learning. 	<p>under state intervention, and allow SBOE authority to oversee application of HEA 1321 as a turnaround strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Grant districts that create a Transformation Zone under SBOE authority staffing and scheduling flexibility akin to that already granted to TSOs under existing statute ○ SBOE to seek ability to take over a failing school corporation as a last resort • To address systemic issues earlier on, SBOE to consider the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Expanding the SBOE's ability to implement turnaround strategies for schools that are both a D and an F. This would afford greater flexibility for the SBOE to support a district but would not require the SBOE to intervene. ○ Moving up the timeline from 6 years as an F, which in practical terms results in a solution being implemented only in Year 8, given the need to identify a turnaround solution and the time involved to begin implementation. • Utilize existing statutory authority to allow students from more than one school to be served in the same facility • Utilize existing statutory authority to ensure MOU with district and TSO addresses issues related to feeder patterns and access to student contact information for those students enrolled in feeder schools
ACCESS TO DATA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The oversight body overseeing turnaround efforts must have access on a real-time basis to student level data, financial information, and any other data required to ensure effective monitoring can occur 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modify statute to ensure that the entity charged with overseeing and monitoring school turnarounds has access to all data necessary to conduct this work effectively